

Top 5 Shows to See in the UK and Ireland this August

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Karla Black, 'sculptures 2001–2021: details for a retrospective', 2021, exhibition view. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne

Karla Black **Fruitmarket, Edinburgh**

Karla Black has been given free run of Fruitmarket, newly expanded as part of a GB£4.3 million development. Old works occupy the pre-existing, white-walled spaces, showcasing Black's attractive, candied aesthetic. Upstairs is a gallery-filling installation, *Punctuation is pretty popular: nobody wants to admit to much* (2008/21): a landscape of pale-pink plaster powder covering nearly the entire floor. Red, orange and lime green threads form curling lines along the ground or dangle from the rafters. The white

walls glow a little with reflected pink. In the ground-floor galleries, standing upright or suspended from the ceiling, are two dozen sculptures dating back to 2006 in Black's characteristic materials: polystyrene, soil, cellophane, cardboard. All may be abstract, but it's hard not to think of sweet things (meringue, spun sugar, tottering wedges of coffee cake) or to see the muted pastel shades as flavours of ice cream (chocolate, pistachio, strawberry). Black's aesthetic makes tackiness tasteful. – *Tom Jeffreys*



Harun Morrison, *Boat as Camera*, 2021–ongoing, foam-board screen, photographs, and *Studio at Night*, 2021, video (2 min 10 sec). Courtesy: the artist and Eastside Projects, Birmingham; photograph: Stuart Whipps

Leah Clements and Harun Morrison
Eastside Projects, Birmingham, UK
Until 31st July

Leah Clements and Harun Morrison have been exploring the ways that water alters our perception of time in parallel solo shows, not originally scheduled to run in tandem, but united due to pandemic-related delays. While Clements evokes the expansion of time that occurs when divers are at the bottom of the ocean and experience an overwhelming desire to stay under, Morrison explores how water functions chemically as a photographic treatment and ecologically as a psychological and physical support. In both exhibitions, fluidity serves as a continuum across different social and geographical contexts. Whether on the murky underbed of the ocean or in the pitch black of a narrowboat-turned-darkroom, Clements and Morrison prompt us momentarily to step outside of time and consider how we might experience life beyond the frenetic pace of contemporary society. – *Jamila Prowse*



Ilana Halperin, *The Rock Cycle*, 2021, exhibition view. Courtesy: the artist and Patricia Fleming Gallery, Glasgow; photograph: Keith Hunter

Ilana Halperin
Mount Stuart House, Isle of Bute

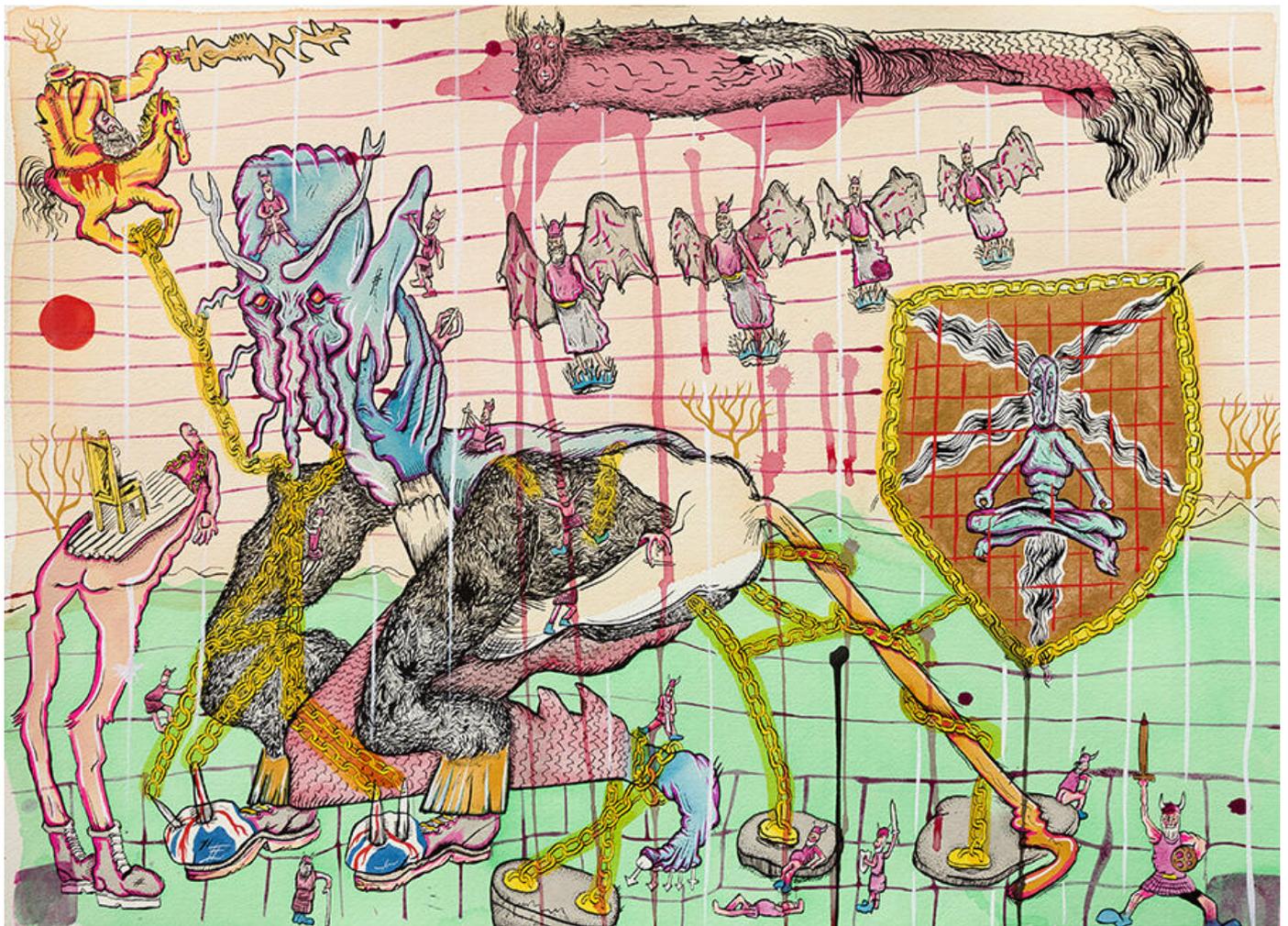
Artist, lithophile and volcano lover Ilana Halperin reminds us that rock is not always rock-steady, and that human and geological time are entwined, not irreconcilable. Many collaborations furnish her exhibition 'There Is a Volcano Behind My House', not all of them with human entities. *The Rock Cycle* (2021) – a cluster of bony objects arranged in the crypt of Mount Stuart House on the Isle of Bute – are newly formed stones. Beachcombed shards of ceramic tile and brick once made on Bute were sent to the Fontaines Pétrifiantes de Saint Nectaire, where they were calcified by subterranean streams delivering a rapid accretion of limestone in a process similar to the formation of stalagmites. The new stones are a European hybrid – Scottish clay and French limestone. Halperin has polished sections so they're worn and smooth as if rubbed like a talisman. – *Hettie Judah*



Dara McGrath, *8 Blarney, Constable Thomas Joseph Walsh, Royal Irish Constabulary*, 2021, photograph of where Constable Thomas Joseph Walsh was killed in an IRA ambush. Courtesy: the artist and Crawford Art Gallery, Cork

Dara McGrath
Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, Ireland

Photographer Dara McGrath's latest exhibition, 'For Those That Tell No Tales' at Crawford Art Gallery, documents sites across Cork where the lives of IRA volunteers, British armed forces and civilians were lost during the Irish War of Independence (1919–21). McGrath's photographs serve as testament to those who died a century ago, connecting their histories to the present topography. Since no witnesses to these events are alive today, we are now the guardians of these memories – and soon, others will be. – *Nigel Swann*



Hardeep Pandhal, *Spectral Scripts Reluctantly Festoon Tantric Dungeon*, 2020. Courtesy: © the artist; photograph: Patrick Jameson

British Art Show 9 Various venues, Aberdeen

In Aberdeen – on Scotland’s east coast – the long-awaited British Art Show 9 (BAS9) opened at the Art Gallery & Museum on 10 July. ‘Britishness’ is a disputed identity in Scotland, and grouping artists together under such a rubric seems itself controversial in 2021. Shows with a broad remit invariably evoke questions with equally broad answers (and curatorial ambitions): is contemporary art a reaction to social, political and local specificities or is it active in creating new utopic, progressive impulses? The BAS9 aspires to ask both. It’s a five-yearly snapshot of artistic production among 47 artists in Britain and a touring exhibition (curated by Irene Aristizábal and Hammad Nasar) that feeds into the communities – first Aberdeen, and later Wolverhampton, Manchester and Plymouth – in which it lands. Its success lies not only in how it appears in the pristine galleries of Aberdeen’s newly refurbished museum but also in the schools and streets that the programme seeks to reach. – *Sean Burns*